

Copyright Lore

■ *Judith Nierman*

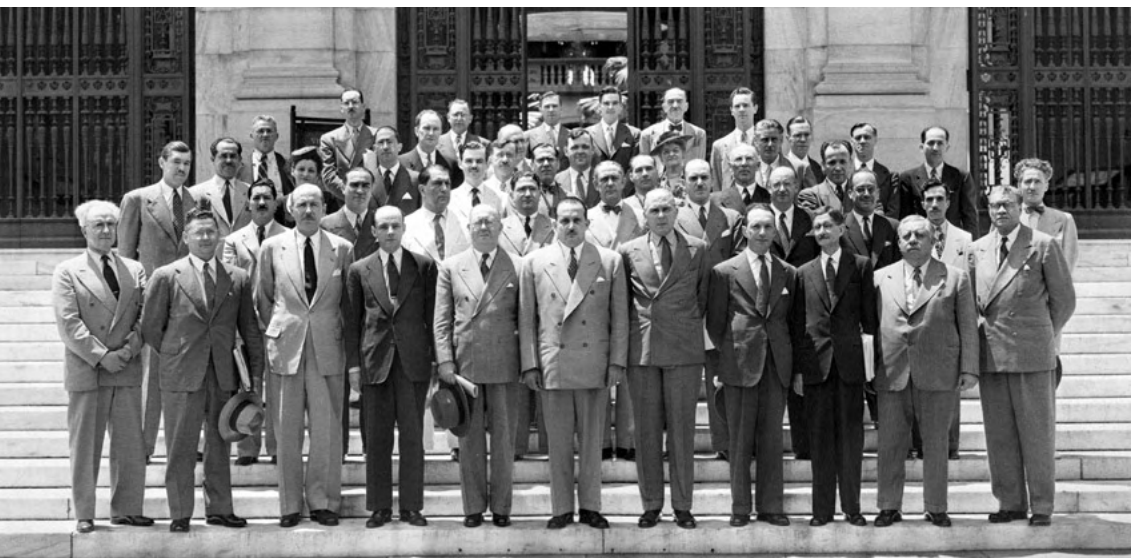
In late spring 1946, delegates to the Inter-American Conference of Experts on Copyrights gathered at the Pan American Union Building in Washington, D.C.

The group concluded that derivative works of literary, scientific, and artistic creations would be protected, including photographic and cinematic adaptations. The duration of copyright would rest on the term recognized by the government originally granting the copyright, but it could not exceed the term

granted by the government of the country in which the copyright was claimed.

As for formalities, the delegates decided that a copyright notice would be encouraged but not required. Also, the moral rights of paternity and attribution were recognized.

In addition, the delegates included a requirement that member states exchange official copyright records regularly. The final draft gave limited protection for titles of works but omitted a definition of publication because of the difficulty of harmoniz-



ABOVE:
Delegates to the Inter-American Conference of Experts on Copyrights gather for a group photo, June 21, 1946.

RIGHT:
Leo S. Rowe's inscription to Register Bass.

From June 1 to June 22, 48 representatives of the 21 member countries of the Pan American Union met to discuss copyright. The meeting was important because it was the first time in the Americas that such a group had met to create a convention on the subject of authors' rights. According to Manuel Canyes, in the September 1946 *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, while previous meetings had discussed copyright, this was the first to focus on the subject. Serving as a delegate was Register of Copyrights Sam Bass Warner.

The group's first task was to select Spanish terminology for copyright. They settled on *derechos de autor*, a term in use today in the Copyright Office's Circular 1 in Spanish, *Fundamentos del Derecho de Autor*.

They considered weighty matters, including what works should be protected. For the first time in a convention in the Americas, the delegates included written or recorded lectures, speeches, sermons, and similar works. Also for the first time, the rights of authors of unpublished works were recognized.

*To the Hon Sam Bass Warner
With the cordial regards of Rowe*

ing Latin American and U.S. understanding of the term. The "Inter-American Convention on the Rights of the Author in Literary, Scientific, and Artistic Works" was signed by the delegates on June 22, 1946.

Prior to the closing session, the group assembled on the steps of the Pan American Building for a photo. The Register is missing from the photo, but standing in the top row, second from the right, is Dr. Leo S. Rowe, the widely respected director general of the Pan American Union. Rowe sent a signed presentation copy of the photo to Warner. Struck by a car while crossing Massachusetts Avenue en route to the Bolivian embassy on Dec. 5, 1946, Rowe died that day.

The Pan American Union became known as the Organization of American States in 1948. ©